

CHAPTER XIII. SUMMARY COURTS-MARTIAL

Rule 1301. Summary courts-martial generally

(a) *Composition.* A summary court-martial is composed of one commissioned officer on active duty. Unless otherwise prescribed by the Secretary concerned a summary court-martial shall be of the same armed force as the accused. Whenever practicable, a summary court-martial should be an officer whose grade is not below lieutenant of the Navy or Coast Guard or captain of the Army, Air Force, or Marine Corps. When only one commissioned officer is present with a command or detachment, that officer shall be the summary court-martial of that command or detachment. When more than one commissioned officer is present with a command or detachment, the convening authority may not be the summary court-martial of that command or detachment.

(b) *Function.* The function of the summary court-martial is to promptly adjudicate minor offenses under a simple procedure. The summary court-martial shall thoroughly and impartially inquire into both sides of the matter and shall ensure that the interests of both the Government and the accused are safeguarded and that justice is done. A summary court-martial may seek advice from a judge advocate or legal officer on questions of law, but the summary court-martial may not seek advice from any person on factual conclusions which should be drawn from evidence or the sentence which should be imposed, as the summary court-martial has the independent duty to make these determinations.

Discussion

For a definition of "minor offenses," see paragraph 1e, Part V.

(c) *Jurisdiction.* Subject to Chapter II, summary courts-martial have the power to try persons subject to the code, except commissioned officers, warrant officers, cadets, aviation cadets, and midshipmen, for any noncapital offense made punishable by the code.

Discussion

See R.C.M. 103(3) for a definition of capital offenses.

(d) *Punishments.*

(1) *Limitations—amount.* Subject to R.C.M. 1003, summary courts-martial may adjudge any punishment not forbidden by the code except death, dismissal, dishonorable or bad-conduct discharge, confinement for more than 1 month, hard labor without confinement for more than 45 days, restriction to specified limits for more than 2 months, or forfeiture of more than two-thirds of 1 month's pay.

Discussion

The maximum penalty which can be adjudged in a summary court-martial is confinement for 30 days, forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for one month, and reduction to the lowest pay grade. See subsection (2) below for additional limits on enlisted persons serving in pay grades above the fourth enlisted pay grade.

A summary court-martial may not suspend all or part of a sentence, although the summary court-martial may recommend to the convening authority that all or part of a sentence be suspended. If a sentence includes both reduction in grade and forfeitures, the maximum forfeiture is calculated at the reduced pay grade. See also R.C.M. 1003 concerning other punishments which may be adjudged, the effects of certain types of punishment, and combination of certain types of punishment. The summary court-martial should ascertain the effect of Article 58a in that armed force.

(2) *Limitations—pay grade.* In the case of enlisted members above the fourth enlisted pay grade, summary courts-martial may not adjudge confinement, hard labor without confinement, or reduction except to the next pay grade.

Discussion

The provisions of this subsection apply to an accused in the fifth enlisted pay grade who is reduced to the fourth enlisted pay grade by the summary court-martial.

(e) *Counsel.* The accused at a summary court-martial does not have the right to counsel. If the accused has civilian counsel provided by the accused and qualified under R.C.M. 502(d)(3), that counsel shall be permitted to represent the accused at the summary court-martial if such appearance will not un-

R.C.M. 1301(e)

reasonably delay the proceedings and if military exigencies do not preclude it.

Discussion

Neither the Constitution nor any statute establishes any right to counsel at summary courts-martial. Therefore, it is not error to deny an accused the opportunity to be represented by counsel at a summary court-martial. However, appearance of counsel is not prohibited. The detailing authority may, as a matter of discretion, detail, or otherwise make available, a military attorney to represent the accused at a summary court-martial.

(f) *Power to obtain witnesses and evidence.* A summary court-martial may obtain evidence pursuant to R.C.M. 703.

Discussion

The summary court-martial must obtain witnesses for the prosecution and the defense pursuant to the standards in R.C.M. 703. The summary court-martial rules on any request by the accused for witnesses or evidence in accordance with the procedure in R.C.M. 703(c) and (f).

(g) *Secretarial limitations.* The Secretary concerned may prescribe procedural or other rules for summary courts-martial not inconsistent with this Manual or the code.

Rule 1302. Convening a summary court-martial

(a) *Who may convene summary courts-martial.* Unless limited by competent authority summary courts-martial may be convened by:

(1) Any person who may convene a general or special court-martial;

(2) The commander of a detached company or other detachment of the Army;

(3) The commander of a detached squadron or other detachment of the Air Force;

(4) The commander or officer in charge of any other command when empowered by the Secretary concerned; or

(5) A superior competent authority to any of the above.

(b) *When convening authority is accuser.* If the convening authority or the summary court-martial is the accuser, it is discretionary with the convening au-

thority whether to forward the charges to a superior authority with a recommendation to convene the summary court-martial. If the convening authority or the summary court-martial is the accuser, the jurisdiction of the summary court-martial is not affected.

(c) *Procedure.* After the requirements of Chapters III and IV of this Part have been satisfied, summary courts-martial shall be convened in accordance with R.C.M. 504(d)(2). The convening order may be by notation signed by the convening authority on the charge sheet. Charges shall be referred to summary courts-martial in accordance with R.C.M. 601.

Discussion

When the convening authority is the summary court-martial because the convening authority is the only commissioned officer present with the command or detachment, *see* R.C.M. 1301(a), that fact should be noted on the charge sheet.

Rule 1303. Right to object to trial by summary court-martial

No person who objects thereto before arraignment may be tried by summary court-martial even if that person also refused punishment under Article 15 and demanded trial by court-martial for the same offenses.

Discussion

If the accused objects to trial by summary court-martial, the convening authority may dispose of the case in accordance with R.C.M. 401.

Rule 1304. Trial procedure

(a) *Pretrial duties.*

(1) *Examination of file.* The summary court-martial shall carefully examine the charge sheet, allied papers, and immediately available personnel records of the accused before trial.

Discussion

“Personnel records” are those personnel records of the accused which are maintained locally and are immediately available. “Allied papers” in a summary court-martial include

convening orders, investigative reports, correspondence relating to the case, and witness statements.

(2) *Report of irregularity.* The summary court-martial shall report to the convening authority any substantial irregularity in the charge sheet, allied papers, or personnel records.

Discussion

The summary court-martial should examine the charge sheet, allied papers, and personnel records to ensure that they are complete and free from errors or omissions which might affect admissibility. The summary court-martial should check the charges and specifications to ensure that each alleges personal jurisdiction over the accused (*see* R.C.M. 202) and an offense under the code (*see* R.C.M. 203 and Part IV). Substantial defects or errors in the charges and specifications must be reported to the convening authority, since such defects cannot be corrected except by preferring and referring the affected charge and specification anew in proper form. A defect or error is substantial if correcting it would state an offense not otherwise stated, or include an offense, person, or matter not fairly included in the specification as preferred. *See* subsection (3) below concerning minor errors.

(3) *Correction and amendment.* The summary court-martial may, subject to R.C.M. 603, correct errors on the charge sheet and amend charges and specifications. Any such corrections or amendments shall be initialed.

(b) *Summary court-martial procedure.*

Discussion

A sample guide is at Appendix 9. The summary court-martial should review and become familiar with the guide used before proceeding.

(1) *Preliminary proceeding.* After complying with R.C.M. 1304(a), the summary court-martial shall hold a preliminary proceeding during which the accused shall be given a copy of the charge sheet and informed of the following:

- (A) The general nature of the charges;
- (B) The fact that the charges have been referred to a summary court-martial for trial and the date of referral;
- (C) The identity of the convening authority;

(D) The name(s) of the accuser(s);

(E) The names of the witnesses who could be called to testify and any documents or physical evidence which the summary court-martial expects to introduce into evidence;

(F) The accused's right to inspect the allied papers and immediately available personnel records;

(G) That during the trial the summary court-martial will not consider any matters, including statements previously made by the accused to the officer detailed as summary court-martial unless admitted in accordance with the Military Rules of Evidence;

(H) The accused's right to plead not guilty or guilty;

(I) The accused's right to cross-examine witnesses and have the summary court-martial cross-examine witnesses on behalf of the accused;

(J) The accused's right to call witnesses and produce evidence with the assistance of the summary court-martial as necessary;

(K) The accused's right to testify on the merits, or to remain silent with the assurance that no adverse inference will be drawn by the summary court-martial from such silence;

(L) If any findings of guilty are announced, the accused's rights to remain silent, to make an unsworn statement, oral or written or both, and to testify, and to introduce evidence in extenuation or mitigation;

(M) The maximum sentence which the summary court-martial may adjudge if the accused is found guilty of the offense or offenses alleged; and

(N) The accused's right to object to trial by summary court-martial.

(2) *Trial proceeding.*

(A) *Objection to trial.* The summary court-martial shall give the accused a reasonable period of time to decide whether to object to trial by summary court-martial. The summary court-martial shall thereafter record the response. If the accused objects to trial by summary court-martial, the summary court-martial shall return the charge sheet, allied papers, and personnel records to the convening authority. If the accused fails to object to trial by summary court-martial, trial shall proceed.

(B) *Arraignment.* After complying with R.C.M. 1304(b)(1) and (2)(A), the summary court-martial

shall read and show the charges and specifications to the accused and, if necessary, explain them. The accused may waive the reading of the charges. The summary court-martial shall then ask the accused to plead to each specification and charge.

(C) *Motions.* Before receiving pleas the summary court-martial shall allow the accused to make motions to dismiss or for other relief. The summary court-martial shall take action on behalf of the accused, if requested by the accused, or if it appears necessary in the interests of justice.

(D) *Pleas.*

(i) *Not guilty pleas.* When a not guilty plea is entered, the summary court-martial shall proceed to trial.

(ii) *Guilty pleas.* If the accused pleads guilty to any offense, the summary court-martial shall comply with R.C.M. 910.

(iii) *Rejected guilty pleas.* If the summary court-martial is in doubt that the accused's pleas of guilty are voluntarily and understandingly made, or if at any time during the trial any matter inconsistent with pleas of guilty arises, which inconsistency cannot be resolved, the summary court-martial shall enter not guilty pleas as to the affected charges and specifications.

(iv) *No plea.* If the accused refuses to plead, the summary court-martial shall enter not guilty pleas.

(v) *Changed pleas.* The accused may change any plea at any time before findings are announced. The accused may change pleas from guilty to not guilty after findings are announced only for good cause.

(E) *Presentation of evidence.*

(i) The Military Rules of Evidence (Part III) apply to summary courts-martial.

(ii) The summary court-martial shall arrange for the attendance of necessary witnesses for the prosecution and defense, including those requested by the accused.

Discussion

See R.C.M. 703. Ordinarily witnesses should be excluded from the courtroom until called to testify. See Mil. R. Evid. 615.

(iii) Witnesses for the prosecution shall be

called first and examined under oath. The accused shall be permitted to cross-examine these witnesses. The summary court-martial shall aid the accused in cross-examination if such assistance is requested or appears necessary in the interests of justice. The witnesses for the accused shall then be called and similarly examined under oath.

(iv) The summary court-martial shall obtain evidence which tends to disprove the accused's guilt or establishes extenuating circumstances.

Discussion

See R.C.M. 703 and 1001.

(F) *Findings and sentence.*

(i) The summary court-martial shall apply the principles in R.C.M. 918 in determining the findings. The summary court-martial shall announce the findings to the accused in open session.

(ii) The summary court-martial shall follow the procedures in R.C.M. 1001 and apply the principles in the remainder of Chapter X in determining a sentence. The summary court-martial shall announce the sentence to the accused in open session.

(iii) If the sentence includes confinement, the summary court-martial shall advise the accused of the right to apply to the convening authority for deferment of the service of the confinement.

(iv) If the accused is found guilty, the summary court-martial shall advise the accused of the rights under R.C.M. 1306(a) and (d) after the sentence is announced.

(v) The summary court-martial shall, as soon as practicable, inform the convening authority of the findings, sentence, recommendations, if any, for suspension of the sentence, and any deferment request.

(vi) If the sentence includes confinement, the summary court-martial shall cause the delivery of the accused to the accused's commanding officer or the commanding officer's designee.

Discussion

If the accused's immediate commanding officer is not the convening authority, the summary court-martial should ensure that the immediate commanding officer is informed of the find-

ings, sentence, and any recommendations pertaining thereto. *See* R.C.M. 1101 concerning post-trial confinement.

Rule 1305. Record of trial

(a) *In general.* The record of trial of a summary court-martial shall be prepared as prescribed in subsection (b) of this rule. The convening or higher authority may prescribe additional requirements for the record of trial.

Discussion

See Appendix 15 for a sample of a Record of Trial by Summary Court-Martial (DD Form 2329).

Any petition submitted under R.C.M. 1306(a) should be appended to the record of trial.

(b) *Contents.* The summary court-martial shall prepare an original and at least two copies of the record of trial, which shall include:

(1) The pleas, findings, and sentence, and if the accused was represented by counsel at the summary court-martial, a notation to that effect;

(2) The fact that the accused was advised of the matters set forth in R.C.M. 1304(b)(1);

(3) If the summary court-martial is the convening authority, a notation to that effect.

(c) *Authentication.* The summary court-martial shall authenticate the record by signing each copy.

Discussion

“Authentication” means attesting that the record accurately reports the proceedings. *See* R.C.M. 1104(a).

(d) *Forwarding copies of the record.*

(1) *Accused’s copy.*

(A) *Service.* The summary court-martial shall cause a copy of the record of trial to be served on the accused as soon as it is authenticated.

(B) *Receipt.* The summary court-martial shall cause the accused’s receipt for the copy of the record of trial to be obtained and attached to the original record of trial or shall attach to the original record of trial a certificate that the accused was served a copy of the record. If the record of trial was

not served on the accused personally, the summary court-martial shall attach a statement explaining how and when such service was accomplished. If the accused was represented by counsel, such counsel may be served with the record of trial.

(C) *Classified information.* If classified information is included in the record of trial of a summary court-martial, R.C.M. 1104(b)(1)(D) shall apply.

(2) *Forwarding to the convening authority.* The original and one copy of the record of trial shall be forwarded to the convening authority after compliance with subsection (d)(1) of this rule.

(3) *Further disposition.* After compliance with R.C.M. 1306(b) and (c), the record of trial shall be disposed of under regulations prescribed by the Secretary concerned.

Rule 1306. Post-trial procedure

(a) *Matters submitted by the accused.* After a sentence is adjudged, the accused may submit written matters to the convening authority in accordance with R.C.M. 1105.

(b) *Convening authority’s action.*

(1) *Who shall act.* Except as provided herein, the convening authority shall take action in accordance with R.C.M. 1107. The convening authority shall not take action before the period prescribed in R.C.M. 1105(c)(3) has expired, unless the right to submit matters has been waived under R.C.M. 1105(d).

(2) *Action.* The action of the convening authority shall be shown on all copies of the record of trial except that provided the accused if the accused has retained that copy. An order promulgating the result of a trial by summary court-martial need not be issued. A copy of the action shall be forwarded to the accused.

(3) *Signature.* The action on the original record of trial shall be signed by the convening authority. The convening authority’s action on other copies of the record of trial shall either be signed by the convening authority or be prepared and certified as true copies of the original.

(4) *Subsequent action.* Any action taken on a summary court-martial after the initial action by the convening authority shall be in writing, signed by

R.C.M. 1306(b)(4)

the authority taking the action, and promulgated in appropriate orders.

Discussion

See R.C.M. 1114 concerning promulgating orders.

(c) *Review by a judge advocate.* Unless otherwise

prescribed by regulations of the Secretary concerned, the original record of the summary court-martial shall be reviewed by a judge advocate in accordance with R.C.M. 1112.

(d) *Review by the Judge Advocate General.* The accused may request review of a final conviction by summary court-martial by the Judge Advocate General in accordance with R.C.M. 1201(b)(3).